

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7797

INFO AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

UNCLAS COPENHAGEN 2417

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, DA (KARL HJORTNAES)

SUBJ: JUSTICE MINISTER KARLHJORTNAES--  
BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

REF: COPENHAGEN 2393

1. JUSTICE MINISTER KARLHJORTNAES WAS BORN ON APRIL 19, 1934 IN HJORRING. ALTHOUGH THE SON OF A FORMER SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARLIAMENTARIAN, HJORTNAES DID NOT BECOME ENGAGED IN POLITICS UNTIL HE STARTED STUDYING MEDICINE IN THE EARLY FIFTIES. AFTER SIX YEARS OF MEDICAL STUDIES, HE SWITCHED TO LAW IN 1959 AND RECEIVED HIS LAW DEGREE IN 1968. HIS STUDIES WERE FINANCED BY A TEACHING JOB IN THE ARMED FORCES EDUCATIONAL SERVICE. SINCE 1968, HE HAS BEEN AN ADVISOR ON SOCIAL RHABILITATION UNDER THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS.

2. HE JOINED THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC STUDENTS ORGANIZATIONFRIT FORUM AT AARHUS UNIVERSITY IN 1953 AND VIA THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THAT ASSOCIATION WAS ELECTED TO THE AARHUS CITY BOARD. A CANDIDATE FOR THE FOLKETING IN 1968, HE WAS DEFEATED, BUT SUCCEEDED IN HIS SECOND TRY IN 1971.

3. HJORTNAES WAS ONE OF THE OLDER "YOUNG TURKS" ELECTED IN 1971, AND HAS CREATED A DISTINCT POLITICAL PROFILE AS A DISSENTER  
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AGAINST THE PARTY'S OFFICIAL PRO-EC STAND, AND AS A MEMBER OF THE

PARTY'S LEFT WING. AT PUBLIC DEBATES PRECEDING THE DANISH REFERENDUM ON EC, HJORTNAES USUALLY REPRESENTED THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION, WHILE PRIME MINISTER JENS OTTO KRAG REPRESENTED THE PARTY'S ACCESSION LINE. HJORTNAES NOW MAINTAINS THAT HE REPEATEDLY SAID THAT ONCE THE DECISION WAS MADE, HE WOULD ABIDE BY IT, AND THAT HIS PERSONAL VIEWS ON THE EC WILL NOT INFLUENCE HIS WORK AS MINISTER OF JUSTICE. THIS PROBABLY TRUE IN THAT THE JUSTICE POST IS NOT A POLITICALLY IMPORTANT ONE IN DENMARK. ALTHOUGH HIS WIFE ALLEGED TO DANISH NEWSPAPERS THAT HER HUSBAND WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO BECOME SOCIAL MINISTER, OR MINISTER OF FINANCE, IT SEEMS EVIDENT THAT KARL HJORTNAES WILL WORK IN THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE WITH HIS CHARACTERISTIC ZEAL AND DILIGENCE. HIS PERSONAL POLITICAL PLATFORM IN THE PARTY WILL BE TO THE LEFT OF CENTER, IN LINE WITH PRIME MINISTER ANKER JORGENSEN, BUT NOT AS FAR LEFT AS EDUCATION MINISTER RITT BJERREGAARD, AND NOT AS FAR RIGHT AS HIS OTHER NEW COLLEAGUE, HOUSING MINISTER SVEND JACOBSEN.

4. HJORTNAES IS MARRIED AND HAS THREE SONS.  
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